Urban Ring EIS Phase 2 Scoping Meeting
October 3, 2001
State Transportation Building, Boston

Opening Remarks - Peter Calcaterra, Project Manager, MBTA

Introduction

Welcome and thank you for participating in this joint federal and state scoping meeting for the Urban Ring Phase 2 Draft Environmental Impact Report and Statement or DEIR/DEIS. This meeting marks a milestone for the Urban Ring, as it is the beginning of the detailed environmental study for the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service component of the project. Phase 2, which is a stand alone component, includes BRT, vehicle maintenance facilities, intelligent transportation system features and several new and improved commuter rail stations.

Meeting Purpose

This meeting is being hosted by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) on behalf of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Unit, the two agencies charged with reviewing environmental documents, and the MBTA, the project proponent. The meeting has a dual purpose.

1. The first purpose is for MEPA to receive comments on the expanded Environmental Notification Form (ENF) and Major Investment Study (MIS) filed by the MBTA on July 26, 2001. These documents summarize work done to date on the Urban Ring project including the proposed three-phased implementation schedule.

   The deadline for comments on the ENF/MIS is October 30, 2001. Comments on that document will be recorded here today, or may be mailed in to Ms. LeAndrea Dames, at MEPA, 251 Causeway St., Boston, MA 02114. A certificate will be issued by MEPA on or about November 9, 2001.

   People who do not have a copy of the ENF/MIS and wish to receive one may contact Fran Dowling at Earth Tech at 978 371-4221, or by email to fdowling@earthtech.com.

2. The second purpose today is to define the scope of a Draft Environmental Impact Report/Statement to be prepared by the MBTA on Phase 2 of the Urban Ring project in accordance with FTA regulations regarding proposed new transit projects. Interested individuals, organizations and federal, state and local agencies have been invited to participate in and comment on the following tasks:

   - Definition of options to be evaluated;
   - Identification of social, economic and environmental impacts to be analyzed; and
   - Suggestion of alternative options that are less costly, or have fewer environmental impacts while achieving similar transportation objectives.

The list of environmental issues to be studied, which will be described briefly during the presentation, will be supplemented and refined according the specific questions and issues raised by interested parties. Again, comments may be recorded here today, or mailed to either MEPA at the address mentioned earlier or to my attention: Peter C. Calcaterra, P.E. , Project Manager, MBTA Planning Department, 10 Park Plaza, Room 5750, Boston, MA 02116.

Background

The extensive public involvement program of the Major Investment Study developed corridor-wide alternatives ranging from low-cost conventional buses to BRT, light rail and heavy rail systems and various combinations of each. A multi-phase implementation concept and schedule was developed, where each stand-alone phase of the corridor-wide improvements builds upon the previous one until all the components of the project are in place.

This phased approach enables tangible service improvements to occur sooner and would result in the level of investment and service to increase with demand and available levels of funding. In Phase 1, Bus Optimization Transportation System Management (TSM) elements not requiring major new construction are proposed, and, therefore, under NEPA/MEPA regulations are implementable without further environmental review. In Phase 3, the rail technology and alignment will be determined during a subsequent environmental process. The subject of this Draft DEIR/DEIS and the focus of today's scoping session is BRT service and its supporting commuter rail connections proposed for Phase 2 of the Urban Ring project.

Upon completion of the Phase 2 Draft EIR/EIS, a public hearing will be held. On the basis of the Draft EIR/EIS and the pubic and agency comments received, a locally preferred Phase 2 alternative will be selected and described in full detail in the Phase 2 Final EIR/EIS. A scoping session similar to this one today would precede development of the necessary EIS for the phase 3 rail options. The scope resulting from today's meeting will not consider the rail alternatives. However, the MEPA certificate will take into account comments received on all three phases of the project.

Meeting Format

The format of this meeting will be a presentation from several project participants followed by public comment. Presenters are:

- Dick Garver, Deputy Director for Planning and Zoning at the BRA, Representing the Compact Communities
- Peter Butler Director of Planning and Program Development, FTA Representing Mary Beth Mello FTA Regional Deputy Director
- LeAndrea Dames Environmental Analyst, MEPA Representing Jay Wickersham, EOEA Assistant Secretary
- Myself and Jay Doyle, AICP, Project Manager of Earth Tech, Inc. describing the work done to date

Following the presentations we welcome public comments, which will be recorded by the Court Reporter. We do ask speakers to limit their statements to no more than three minutes to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to be heard. As mentioned earlier, comments can also be mailed in by the deadline shown above.

Again, thank you for coming and participating in this beginning of the next stage of the Urban Ring project.

Urban Ring Phase 2 Scoping Meeting

PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

Use the space below (and back of this page, if necessary) to provide written comments on Phase 2 of the MBTA's Urban Ring Circumferential Transit Improvement Project. You may submit this form during the public meeting, or write your comments down later and submit them by mail. Comments are also welcome in the form of a letter. Mailed comments must be received no later than Tuesday, October 30, 2001, and should be sent to:

Ms. LeAndrea Dames
MEPA
251 Causeway Street, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02114

Your name: _____

Representing: _____

Street: _____

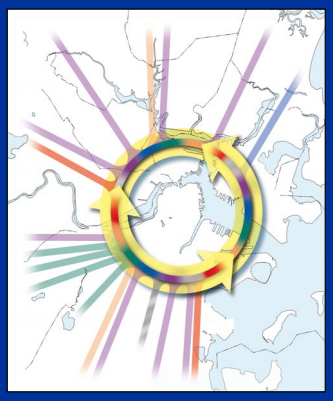
City: _____

State & zip: _____

Phone/e-mail: _____

COMMENTS:

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

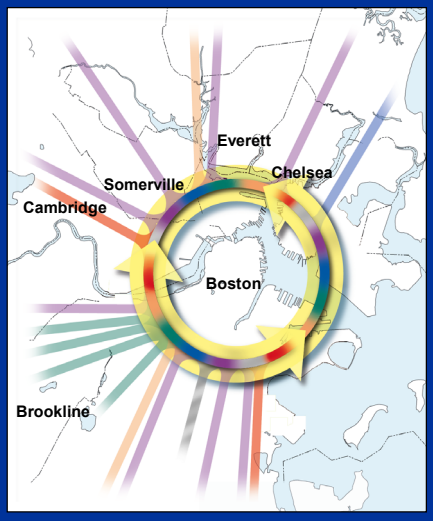


The Urban Ring
Phase 2 DEIR/S
Project Overview Presentation

Public Scoping Meeting

October 3, 2001

The Urban Ring



The Urban Ring

Presentation Summary

- Urban Ring project overview
- Phase 2 MIS results
- Scope Phase 2 DEIS/R

The Urban Ring

Purpose and Need

- Accessibility of the corridor transit system and mobility of its users is inadequate
- Transit congestion in the Boston core remains a problem
- The environment is negatively impacted by high VMT and congestion
- Economic development is constrained by traffic congestion and poor access
- Needs are immediate and growing rapidly

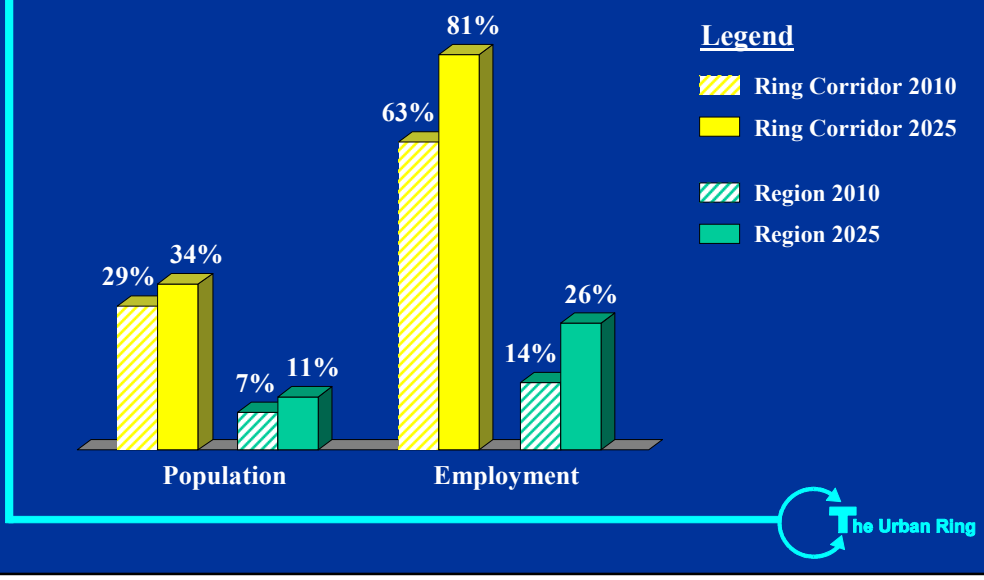
The Urban Ring

Goals

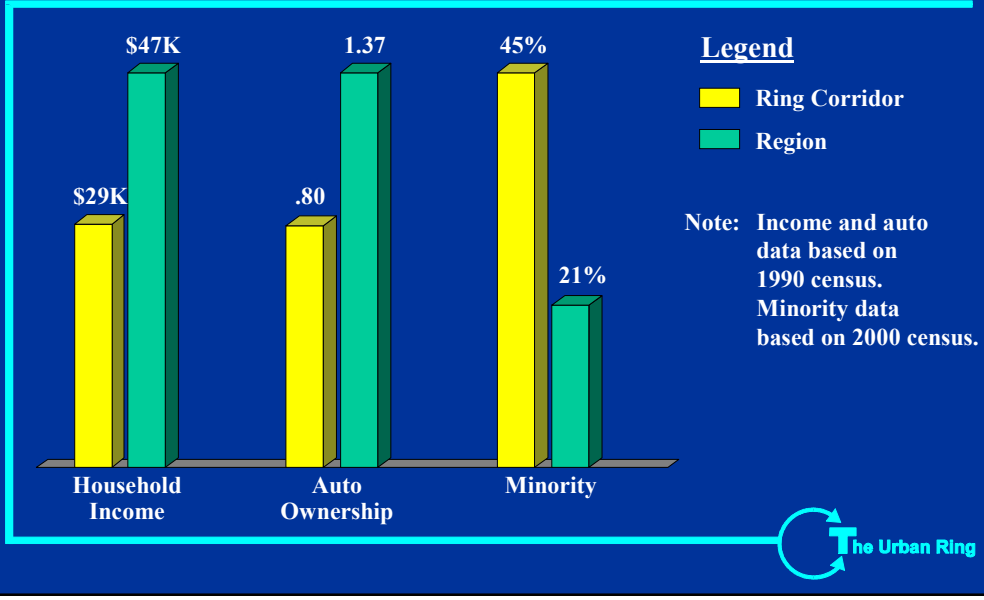
1. Improve access in corridor / reduce travel time
2. Reduce congestion in transit system
3. Improve transit connections
4. Support local development and land use vision
5. Environmental improvement

The Urban Ring

Population and Employment Increase 1990-2010 and 1990-2025



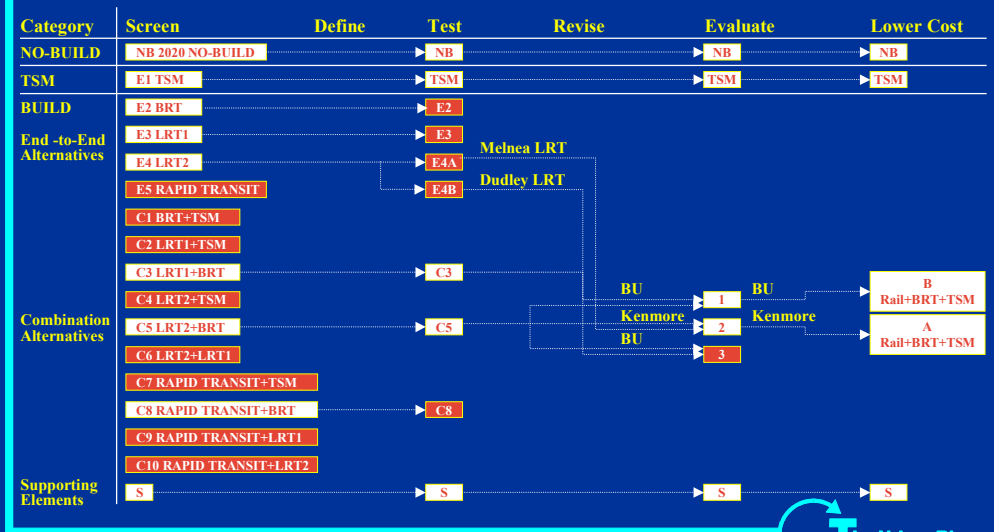
Urban Ring Neighborhoods Depend on Transit



Regional Planning Compact
October 19, 1995

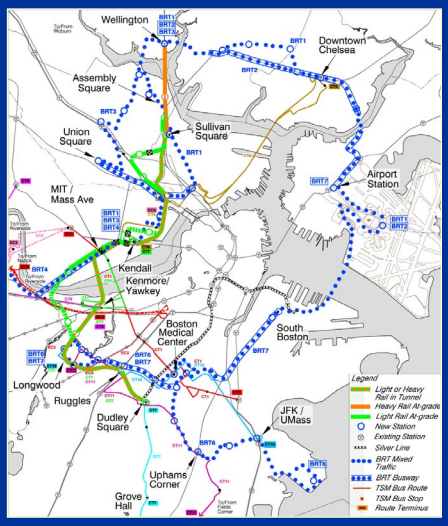
The Urban Ring

Study Process



The Urban Ring

Urban Ring Project
Phases 1, 2, 3



The Urban Ring

Phased Implementation of Project

Phase 1
2001-2005

Bus

Phase 2
2006-2010

Commuter Rail

BRT

Bus

Phase 3
2011-2015

LRT or Orange Line

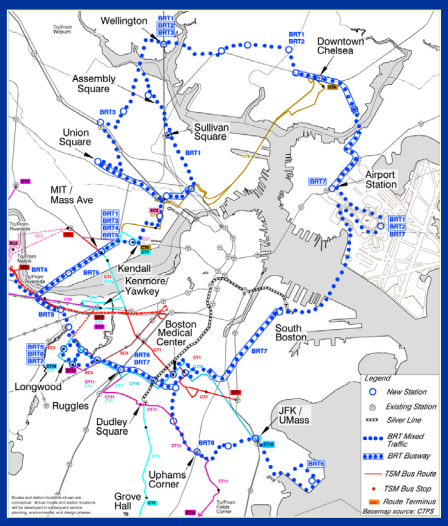
Commuter Rail

BRT

Bus

The Urban Ring

Phase 2 - Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)



- Focus of meeting today
- Subject of the DEIR/S

The Urban Ring

What Is Bus Rapid Transit?

- 60 foot, low floor low emission, articulated vehicle
- "Smart Systems" - Signal priority and passenger information
- Bus lanes and stations
- Separate rights-of-way
- Rapid transit frequency

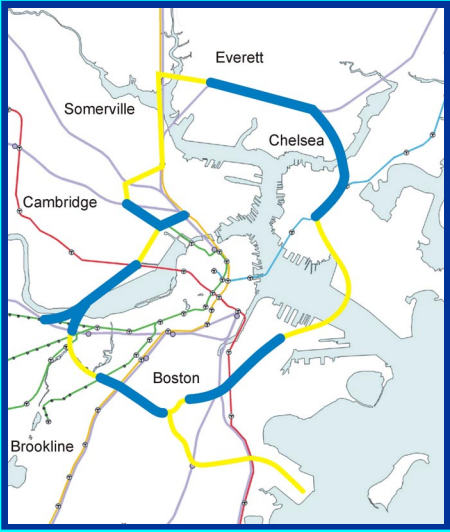
The Urban Ring

BRT Operating Environment

- Mixed traffic
- Dedicated lanes
- Separate right-of-way

The Urban Ring

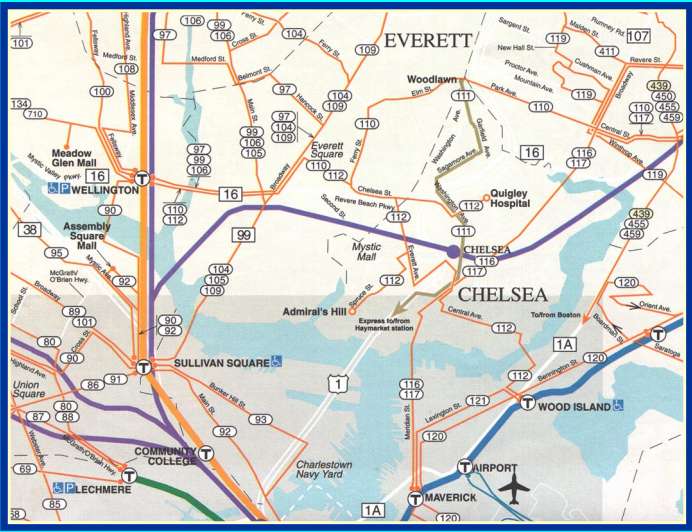
BRT Separated from Traffic



- Five BRT segments use separate right-of-way
- Ten miles of separate right-of-way

The Urban Ring

East Boston, Chelsea & Everett
Existing MBTA Services

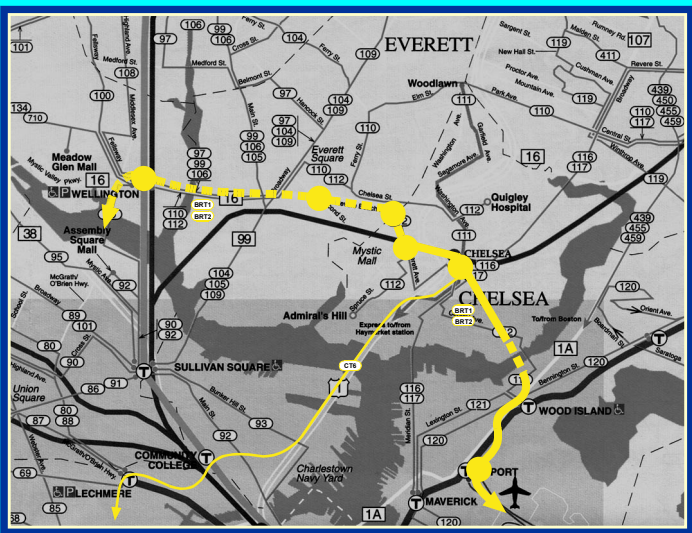


Existing Routes

- Bus
- Transit
- Commuter Rail
- Urban Ring Bus

The Urban Ring

East Boston, Chelsea & Everett
Urban Ring Phase 2



Urban Ring Routes

- BRT Mixed Traffic
- BRT Busway
- Urban Ring Bus Route
- BRT Route Number

The Urban Ring

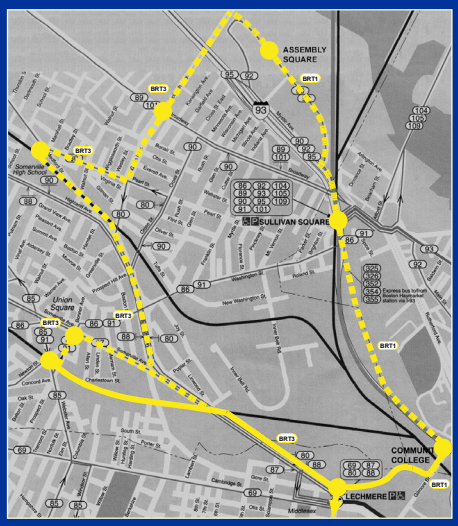
Somerville
Existing MBTA Services

Existing Routes

- Bus
- Transit
- Commuter Rail
- Urban Ring Bus

The Urban Ring

Somerville
Urban Ring Phase 2

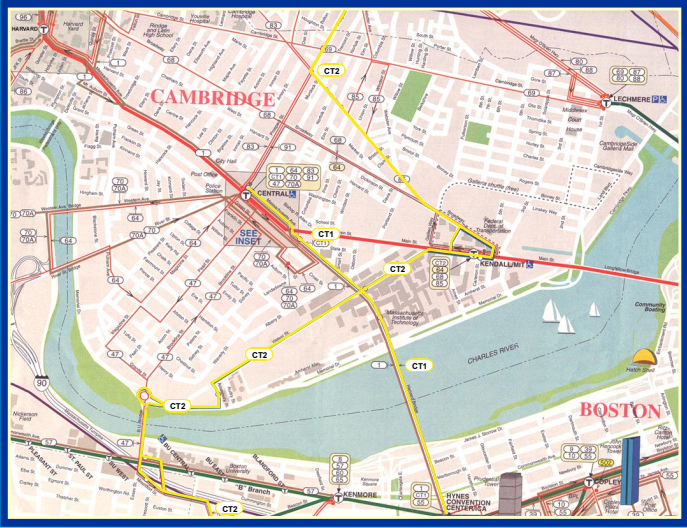


Urban Ring Routes

- BRT Mixed Traffic
- BRT Busway
- BRT Route Number

The Urban Ring

Cambridge
Existing MBTA Services

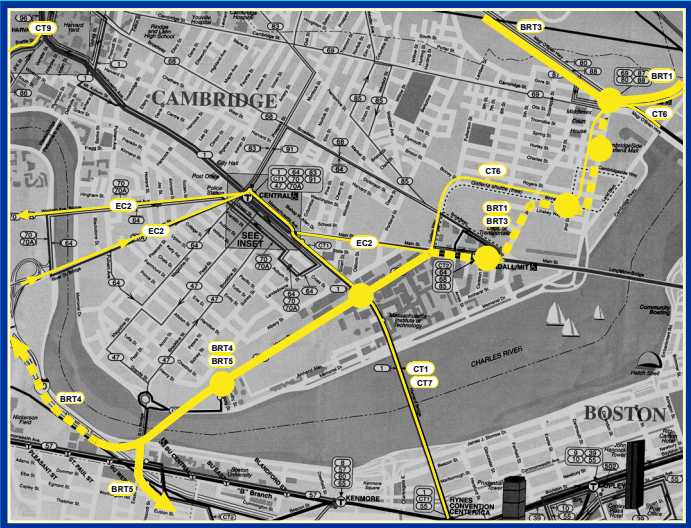


Existing Routes

- 16 — Bus
- T — Transit
- Commuter Rail
- CT2 — Urban Ring Bus

The Urban Ring

Cambridge
Urban Ring Phase 2



Urban Ring Routes

- BRT Mixed Traffic
- BRT Busway
- CT6 — Urban Ring Bus Route
- BRT1 — BRT Route Number

The Urban Ring

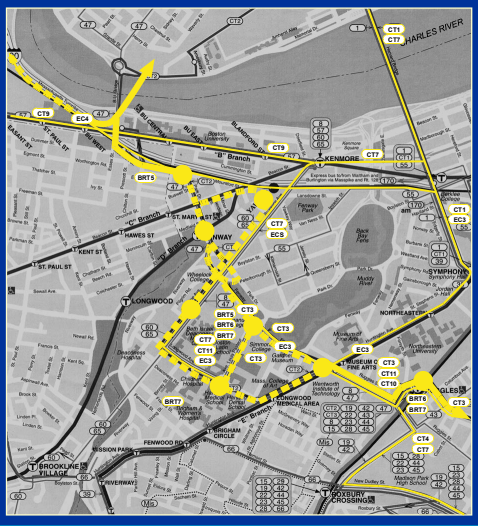
Brookline and Boston
Existing MBTA Services

Existing Routes

- 16 Bus
- T Transit
- Commuter Rail
- CT2 Urban Ring Bus

The Urban Ring

Brookline and Boston
Urban Ring Phase 2

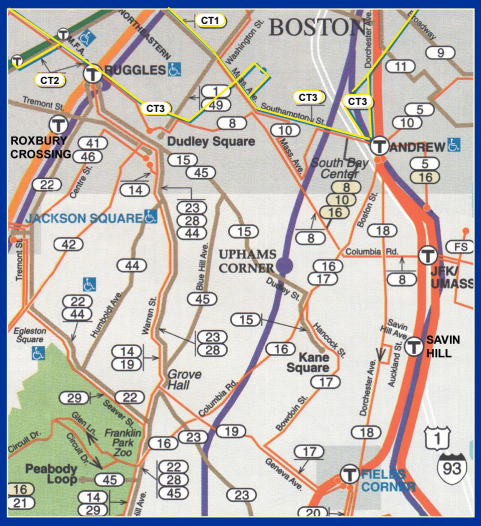


Urban Ring Routes

- BRT Mixed Traffic
- BRT Busway
- CT6 Urban Ring Bus Route
- BRT1 BRT Route Number

The Urban Ring

Roxbury and Dorchester
Existing MBTA Services

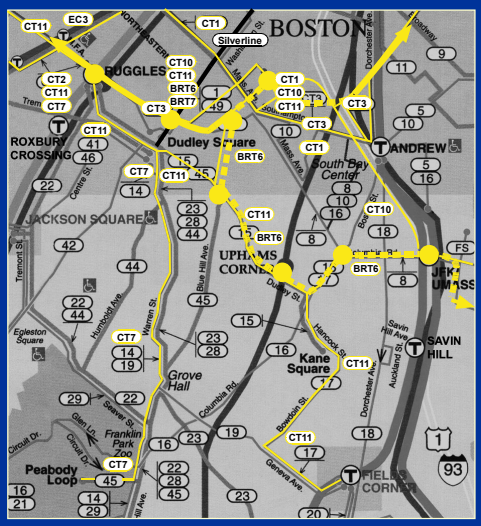


Existing Routes

- 16 Bus
- Transit
- Commuter Rail
- CT2 Urban Ring Bus

The Urban Ring

Roxbury and Dorchester
Urban Ring Phase 2

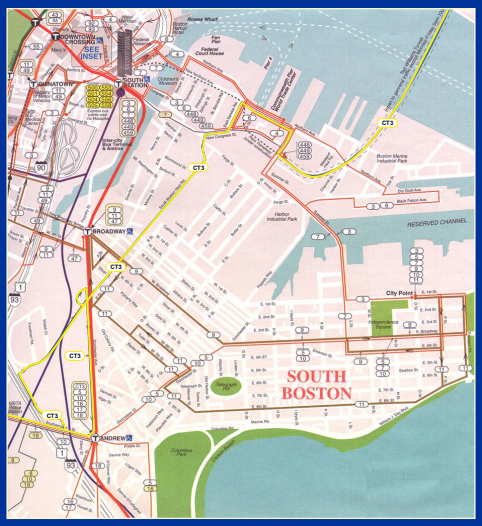


Urban Ring Routes

- BRT Mixed Traffic
- BRT Busway
- CT5 Urban Ring Bus Route
- BRT3 BRT Route Number

The Urban Ring

South Boston
Existing MBTA Services

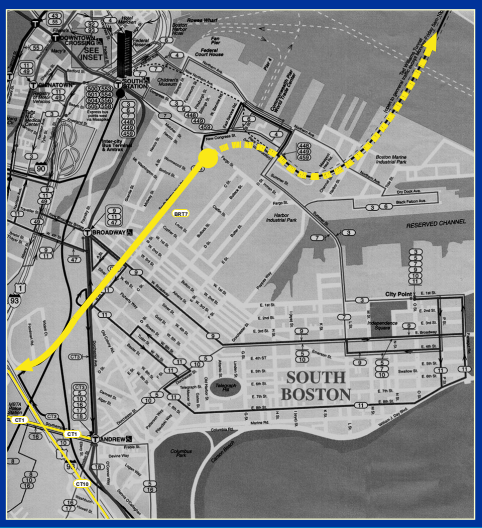


Existing Routes

- Bus
- Transit
- Commuter Rail
- Urban Ring Bus

The Urban Ring

South Boston
Urban Ring Phase 2



Urban Ring Routes

- BRT Mixed Traffic
- BRT Busway
- Urban Ring Bus Route
- BRT Route Number

The Urban Ring

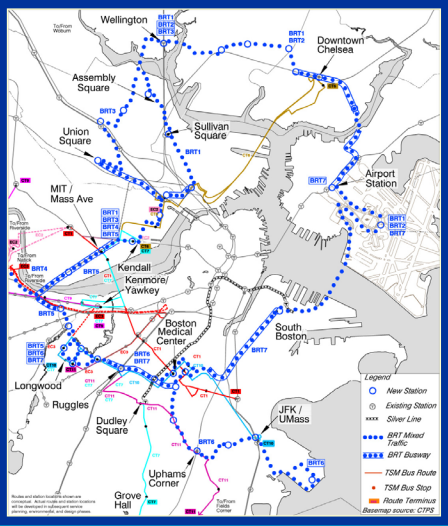
BRT Service and Routes

Capacity = 97 Persons per BRT Vehicle
Service every 10 minutes in each direction on the following routes:

- BRT1 Logan - Kendall
- BRT2 Logan - Wellington
- BRT3 Wellington - Kendall
- BRT4 Riverside - Kendall
- BRT5 New Lechmere - Longwood
- BRT6 Longwood - UMass Boston
- BRT7 Longwood - Logan

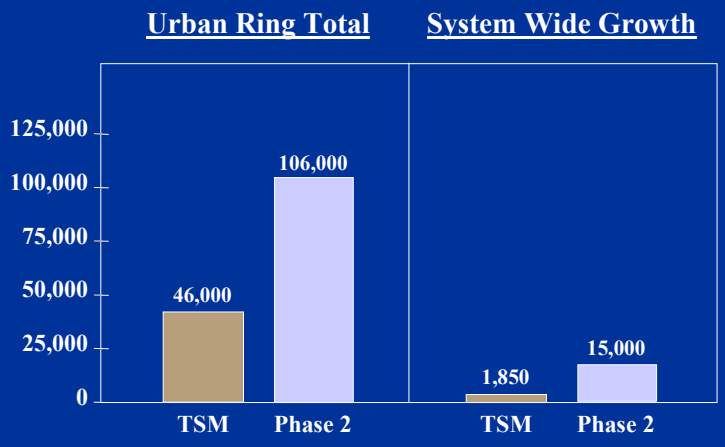
The Urban Ring

Phase 2 - Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)



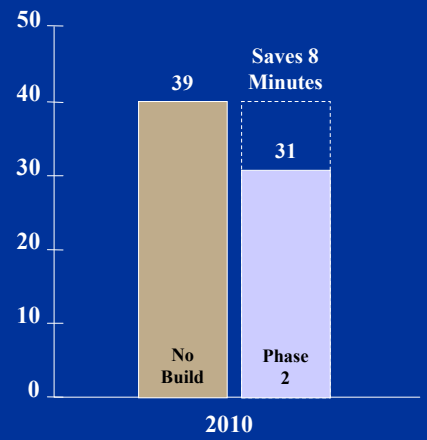
The Urban Ring

Urban Ring Phase 2 Daily Ridership 2010



The Urban Ring

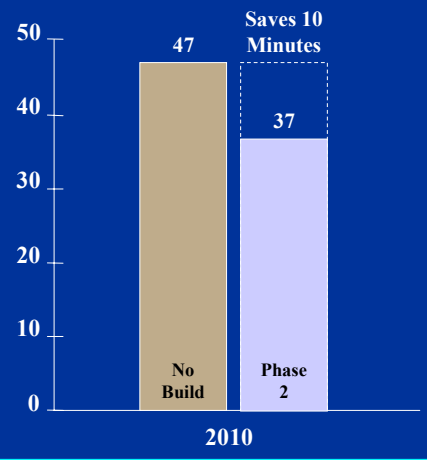
Goal #1 Improve Access in Corridor
Reduce Transit Travel Times



The Urban Ring

Goal #1 Improve Access in Corridor
Reduce Transit Travel Times

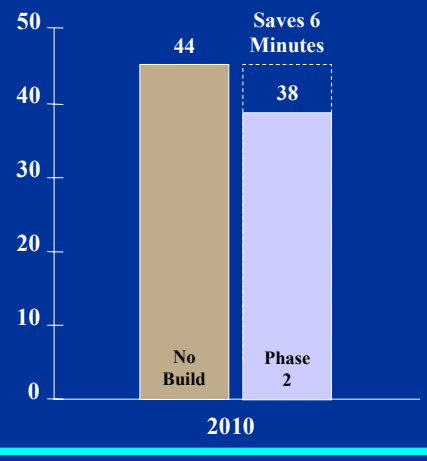
Dudley Square to Kendall Square



The Urban Ring

Goal #1 Improve Access in Corridor
Reduce Transit Travel Times

Alewife to Kenmore



The Urban Ring

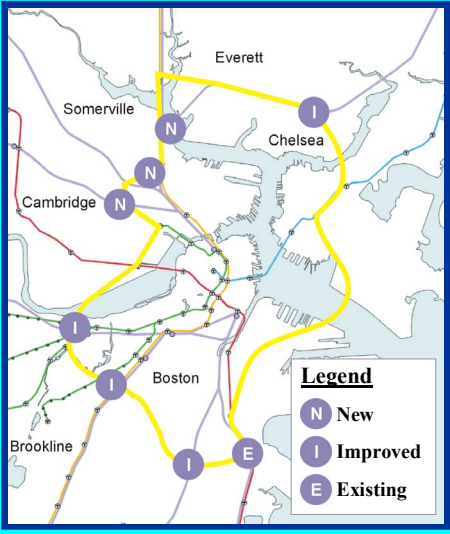
Goal #2 Reduce Transit System Congestion

- Reduces congestion by 24,550 fewer local bus riders daily

- Reduces congestion by 90,500 fewer rapid transit riders daily

The Urban Ring

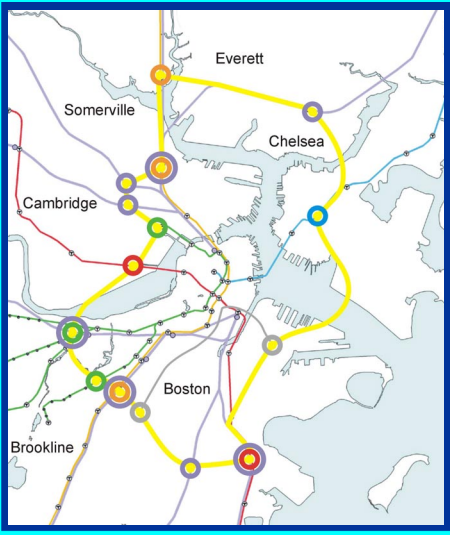
Goal #3: Improve Transit Connections
Commuter Rail Lines



- Three new stations:
  - Sullivan Square
  - Gilman Square (Somerville)
  - Union Square
- Four improved
  - Chelsea
  - Ruggles
  - Yawkey
  - Uphams Corner
- Just opened - JFK/Umass
- Increases Ridership by 7,900 Daily

The Urban Ring

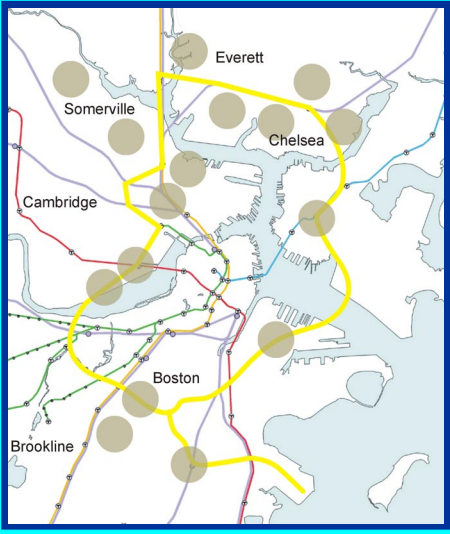
Goal #3: Improve Transit Connections *Intermodal*



- Provides 19 intermodal transfer options
- Connects with half of MBTA bus routes
- Improves inbound and outbound commute options

The Urban Ring

Goal #4: Support Local Development Priorities



- Provides direct access to:
  - Local Economic Target Zones
  - Lower Income/Low Auto Ownership Neighborhoods
- Encourages
  - Brownfields Development
  - Livable Communities
  - Transit Oriented Development
  - Containing Sprawl
  - Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

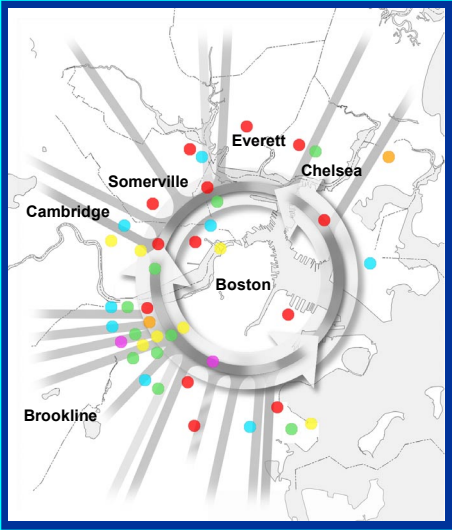
The Urban Ring

Goal#4: Support Local Development Priorities - *Job Access*

- 325,000 Corridor jobs by 2010
- Improves inbound and outbound commute options
- Connects jobs with neighborhoods

The Urban Ring

Goal #5: Support Land Use Vision



- 304,000 Corridor residents by 2010
- Access to existing:
  - Commercial Centers
  - Education
  - Cultural Centers
  - Hospitals
  - Recreation
  - Transportation Nodes

The Urban Ring

Goal #6: Environmental Improvement

- Reduces daily Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in region by:
  - 52,500 in Phase 2
  - 4,500 in TSM
- BRT uses low emission vehicles
- Improves air quality by reducing emissions of
  - VOC
  - CO
  - NO_x
  - CO_2
  - Particulates

The Urban Ring

Phase 2 Environmental Scope

- Corridor characteristics
- BRT and supporting elements
- Transportation impacts
- Environmental impacts
- Economic development and land use
- Financial plan
- Evaluation summary

The Urban Ring

Phase 2 Issue Areas

- Traffic impacts
- Charles River crossing/use of Grand Jct. R.R.
- Turnpike busway ramps
- MDC property impacts
- BRT and Commuter Rail stations
- Maintenance facilities

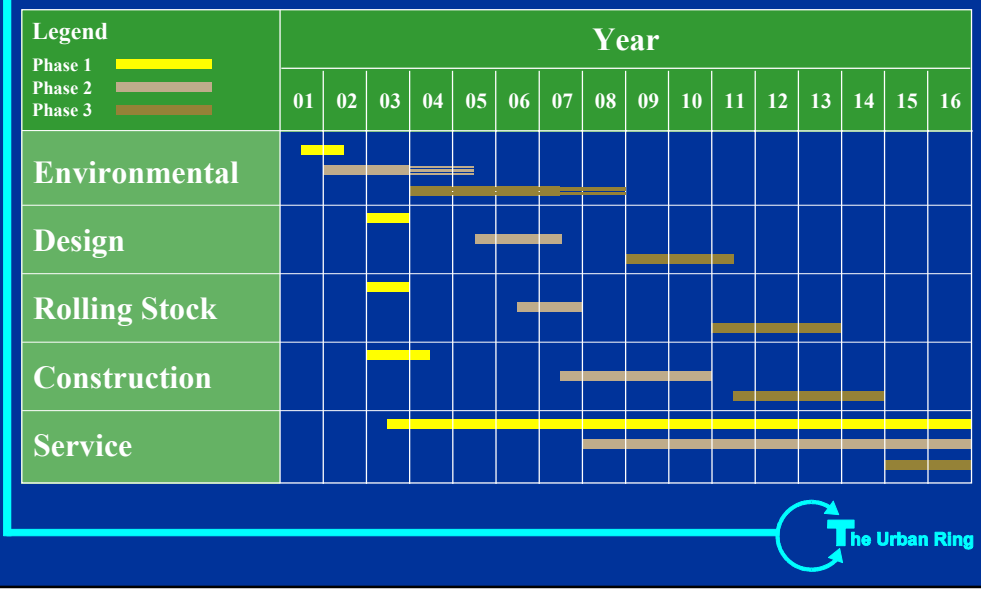
The Urban Ring

Phase 2 Issue Areas (Continued)

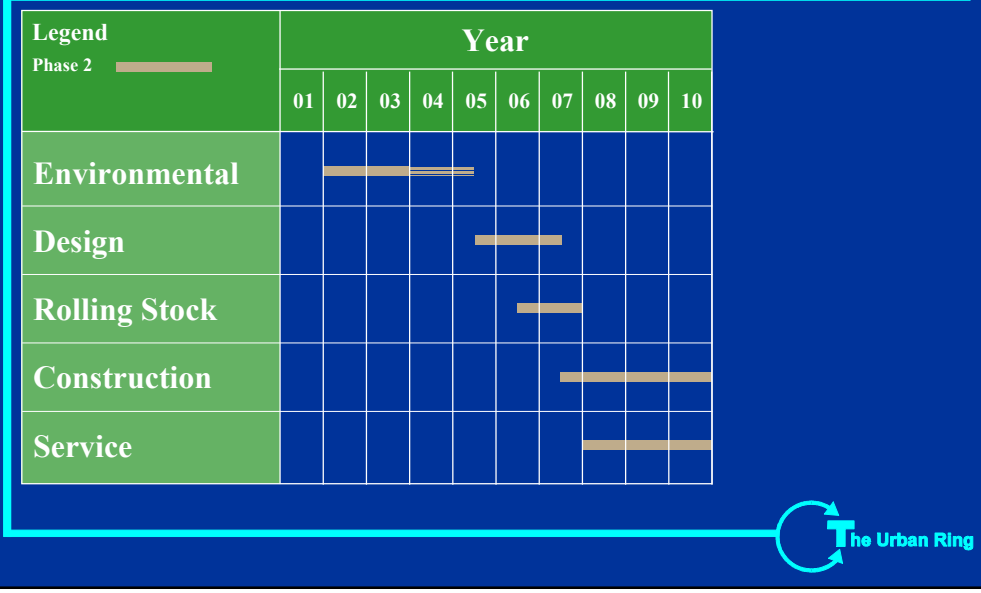
- Access control to busways
- Huntington Avenue BRT crossing
- Coordination with municipal planning initiatives
- ITS coordination
- Commuter Rail scheduling
- Preserve future rail options

The Urban Ring

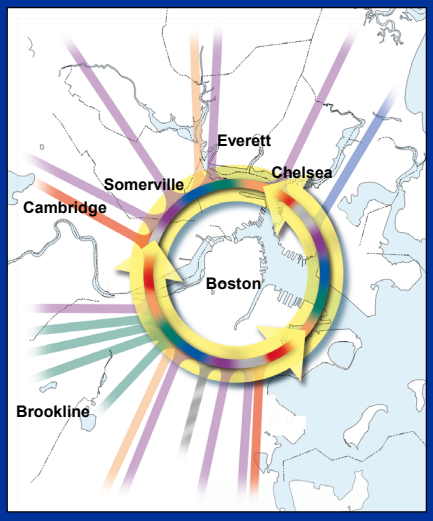
Proposed Full Project Schedule



Proposed Phase 2 Schedule



The Urban Ring - Comments



The Urban Ring